

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 AS-01 EUR-12 AID-05 EB-07
TRSE-00 ACDA-07 NRC-05 ERDA-05 OES-07 FEA-01
DLOS-09 DHA-02 AGRE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00 AF-10
NEA-10 /124 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 673

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CANBERRA 4309

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, PINT, EGEN, ENRG, EMIN, US, AS

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

SUMMARY: PRIMARY PURPOSE OF PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON IS TO MEET PRESIDENT CARTER AND TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL ISSUES WITH HIM. THE VISIT ITSELF WILL BOOST THE PRIME MINISTER'S POLITICAL STANDING IN AUSTRALIA, GIVE HIM THE CHANCE TO SHOW THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS THE NEW AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION'S CONFIDENCE, AND THAT US IS PREPARED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH GOA ON MOST OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ITEMS ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S AGENDA; PROBABLE AUSTRALIAN VIEWS ON THEM ARE OUTLINED BELOW. END SUMMARY

1. AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL ROLE AND AUSTRALIAN-US RELATIONS: THE PRIME MINISTER WILL STRESS THAT THE US IS AUSTRALIA'S CLOSEST ALLY AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH US IN AREAS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. HE WILL BE VERY INTERESTED IN GLOBAL SECURITY MATTERS, US APPRECIATION OF RELATIONS WITH USSR AND PRC, AND OUR INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO SALT II, ARMS
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CONTROL IN GENERAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY ISSUES. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, HE IS APT TO EMPHASIZE THAT AUSTRALIA IS ANXIOUS TO SERVE AS A BRIDGE TO UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE COMMONWEALTH AND, WITHIN A REGIONAL CONTEXT, THE ASEAN COUNTRIES IN SEEKING COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS TO ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS WHICH DIVIDE THE DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING WORLD.

2. SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE AUSTRALIANS WILL WISH TO REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION WITH US. THEY MAY BE MORE ANXIOUS THAN WE TO SEEK TO INSTITUTIONALIZE WESTERN SUPPORT FOR AND ASSISTANCE TO ASEAN. THEY WILL ALSO WELCOME US MOVES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM AND WILL ENCOURAGE US TO CONTINUE TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION. COMMENT: CURRENTLY, GIVEN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE IN AUSTRALIA, THERE IS LITTLE THE GOA CAN DO TO INCREASE ITS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO ASEAN NATIONS EITHER BILATERALLY OR THROUGH THE ADB. MOREOVER, AUSTRALIA'S QUOTAS AND TARIFFS ARE HAMPERING IMPORTS FROM THE ASEAN COUNTRIES TO AUSTRALIA AND BECOMING AN IRRITANT IN HER RELATIONS WITH THEM.

3. US MILITARY POSTURE IN THE REGION AND ITS INTERFACE WITH AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE POLICY: THE FRASER GOVERNMENT WANTS THE US TO REMAIN A MAJOR POWER IN THE PACIFIC REGION AND IT IS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED BY THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW AMERICAN TROOPS FROM KOREA. THE AUSTRALIANS WILL ALSO BE ANXIOUS TO HEAR HOW THE PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS ARE GOING AND TO ASCERTAIN WHAT PLANS WE HAVE FOR CONTINUING TO PROVIDE MODEST AMOUNTS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SELECTED ASIAN NATIONS. FRASER IS BY NATURE A DEEPLY CONSERVATIVE MAN, AND HE IS CONCERNED THAT THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE MAY HAVE LESSENED AMERICAN WILLINGNESS TO PLAY A POLITICO-MILITARY ROLE IN THE EAST ASIA/PACIFIC AREA. HE WILL BE LOOKING FOR REASSURANCE FROM THE PRESIDENT ON THIS SCORE. AUSTRALIA'S
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OWN DEFENSE FORCE IS MODEST BY ANY STANDARDS AND CURRENT AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE POLICY IS DESIGNED TO DEFEND THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT. SIMPLY PUT, CURRENT AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO PROTECT AUSTRALIA'S OFFSHORE FISHERIES AND THERE IS NO PROSPECT THAT THIS POSITION WILL CHANGE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THE AUSTRALIANS WILL CONTINUE TO STATION SOME MIRAGE AIRCRAFT AT BUTTERFIELD AIR BASE IN MALAYSIA.

4. URANIUM AND NON-PROLIFERATION: THE EXPORT OF URANIUM IS A VERY TOUCHY SUBJECT POLITICALLY IN AUSTRALIA. ANY GOVERNMENT DECISIONS HAVE HINGED ON THE FOX REPORT, WHICH IS FINALLY COMPLETED AND BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC. IT IS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO PROCEED WITH THE EXPORT OF URANIUM BUT THAT A MAJOR CONSIDERATION IS THE STRINGENCY OF SAFEGUARDS--BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL. THE PRIME MINISTER'S MAY 24 STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT IS THE MOST DEFINITIVE STATEMENT TO DATE OF AUSTRALIA'S VIEWS ON

SAFEGUARDS. FRASER HAS INDICATED IN LETTERS TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN DEVELOPING STRINGENT SAFEGUARDS. HE UNDOUBTEDLY WILL WISH TO KNOW WHERE WE INTEND TO GO IN PURSUING OUR GOALS WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE POLICY (CANBERRA 04168) AND HOW AUSTRALIAN POLICY DECISIONS, YET TO BE MADE, CAN BE MESHED MOST EFFECTIVELY WITH OURS TO ACHIEVE MUTUAL OBJECTIVES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT A GROUP OF EXPERTS IN THIS AREA, -WHICH FOLLOWED HIM TO EUROPE, WILL ALSO BE IN WASHINGTON FOR FOLLOW UP TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH US GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES.

5. THE INDIAN OCEAN: THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS DEFENSE MINISTER HAVE BEEN MORE CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN THAN ARE US POLICY MAKERS AND HAVE ON OCCASION IN THE PAST, AND TO THEIR POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT, BEEN MORE ALARMIST THAN US DECISION MAKERS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIET INTENTIONS. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL PROBABLY WISH TO DISCUSS THE INDIAN OCEAN AND TO TAKE THE OCCASION OF THIS VISIT TO PUT HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY CLOSER TO OURS ON THIS ISSUE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CANBERRA 4309

6. NORTH ASIA: AS NOTED EARLIER THE PRIME MINISTER

IS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED BY OUR DECISION TO WITHDRAW TROOPS FROM KOREA AND WILL BE ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN CURRENT US THINKING ON FUTURE RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND US POLICY ON THE FUTURE OF TAIWAN. HE WILL ALSO WISH TO REVIEW THE CURRENT US-JAPANESE ECONOMIC AND SECURITY RELATIONS.

7. SOUTH PACIFIC: THE FRASER GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED THAT THE CHINESE AND THE RUSSIANS ARE BEGINNING TO ESTABLISH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SMALL ISLAND STATES. THEY REALIZE THAT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND MUST SHOULDER THE MAIN BURDEN FOR PROVIDING ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THESE STATES BUT HOPE THAT THE US WILL PROVIDE MODEST ASSISTANCE AS WELL. THEY PROBABLY WILL WELCOME THE USG DECISION ON THE SKIPJACK TUNA PROJECT.

8. GLOBAL PROBLEMS: UNDER THIS HEADING THE AUSTRALIANS INCLUDE ENERGY, LAW OF THE SEA, EAST-WEST RELATIONS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY WILL BE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN OBTAINING US VIEWS ON THESE SUBJECTS. FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK, WHO WILL BE ACCOMPANYING THE PRIME MINISTER, CONFIDENTIAL

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WILL HAVE ATTENDED THE RECENT CIEC MINISTERIAL AND BE WELL BRIEFED ON THE OECD MINISTERIAL WHICH HE WILL CHAIR ON THE FIRST DAY. THE PRIME MINISTER TOO WILL PROBABLY BE WELL UP ON NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES WHICH WERE MAJOR SUBJECTS AT THE JUST COMPLETED COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE.

9. ECONOMIC ISSUES:

A) OUR GOA SOURCES SHARE OUR JUDGMENT THAT ECONOMIC ISSUES ARE NOT HIGH ON FRASER'S AGENDA. THE LIST OF TOPICS FORWARDED BY DFA VIA THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY TO THE DEPARTMENT SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TOUCHED ONLY CASUALLY ON THIS SUBJECT UNDER HEADING BVII ("INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES PARTICULARLY DEVELOPED-DEVELOPING COUNTRY RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE"). BUT AS NOTED ABOVE, SINCE THIS LIST WAS PREPARED FRASER HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO THE COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN LONDON AND PEACOCK TO THE CIEC MEETINGS IN PARIS. IN THESE MEETINGS EITHER OR BOTH MAY HAVE BECOME ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN ONE OR MORE NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES AND RAISE THEM DURING THE WASHINGTON VISIT. AN OBVIOUS POSSIBILITY IS THE COMMON FUND, ON WHICH AS THE DEPARTMENT WILL KNOW FROM LONDON REPORTING, FRASER TOOK A PROMINENT POSITION. WE ARE ASSURED, HOWEVER, BY OUR CANBERRA SOURCES THAT FRASER'S LONDON POSITION MARKS NO ADVANCE OVER THE EARLIER AUSTRALIAN

POSITION WHICH IS IN LINE WITH THE US. THEREFORE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE ANY SPECIFIC QUESTION ON THIS TOPIC WHICH FRASER MIGHT RAISE.

B) A SECOND OBVIOUS TRADE ISSUE IS THE PERENNIAL QUESTION OF AUSTRALIAN BEEF. GIVEN THE EMPHASIS FRASER HAS PLACED ON THIS IN THE PAST, WE THINK IT LIKELY HE WILL WISH AT LEAST TO TOUCH ON THIS SUBJECT, IF ONLY TO REMIND THE US SIDE OF ITS CONTINUING IMPORTANCE TO AUSTRALIA. GIVEN THE FACT, HOWEVER, THAT AUSTRALIA
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THIS YEAR TO DATE HAS BEEN UNDERFILLING ITS QUOTA, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY HE WOULD WISH TO MAKE A MAJOR ISSUE OF BEEF TRADE.

C) A THIRD POSSIBILITY IS THAT FRASER OR A MEMBER OF HIS PARTY MAY TAKE THE OCCASION OF THE WHITE HOUSE VISIT TO MENTION THE PENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF A SECOND US AIR CARRIER ON THE US-AUSTRALIA ROUTE. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS CLEARLY ON RECORD IN OPPOSITION TO ANY ADDITIONAL CARRIERS AND REGISTERED THIS POSITION DURING THE HEARINGS BEFORE THE CAB. GIVEN RECENT PUBLICITY, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE BOARD'S FAVORABLE ACTION ON THE CONTINENTAL AIRLINES APPLICATION FOR THIS ROUTE, THE US SIDE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MATTER MAY BE RAISED.

10. OTHER INTERNATIONAL ISSUES INCLUDING SOUTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST: ONCE AGAIN THE AUSTRALIANS WILL WANT TO HEAR OUR VIEWS. THE PRIME MINISTER TOOK A STRONG STAND AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL POLICIES AT THE RECENT COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF STATE GOVERNMENT MEETING. THIS WAS RELATIVELY EASY FOR HIM TO DO BECAUSE THE PROBLEM IS FAR FROM AUSTRALIA'S SHORES. THIS ALSO GAVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT AUSTRALIA'S VIEWS ACCORD WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN THIS AREA. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED, HOWEVER, THAT AUSTRALIA IS A WHITE COUNTRY AND HAS EVERY INTENTION OF REMAINING ONE. SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF LIBERAL AND COUNTRY PARTY POLITICIANS ARE SECRETLY SYMPATHETIC TO THE RACIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RHODESIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS. THE FRASER GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS US MOVES TO SEEK A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AND WOULD BE INCLINED TO SUPPORT US INITIATIVES TO PERSUADE ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. AUSTRALIA HAS ONLY A SMALL JEWISH COMMUNITY; MOST OF WHOM HAVE TRADITIONALLY SUPPORTED THE
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AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY.

11. CONCLUSION: AS NOTED ABOVE FRASER'S PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO MEET THE PRESIDENT AND, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, TO ALIGN HIMSELF WITH NEW US POLICY INITIATIVES. HE WANTS TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE THAT HE HAS A CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, AND THAT HE IS THOROUGHLY CLUED IN ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES. ALSTON

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TAGS: PARM, PINT, EGEN, ENRG, EMIN, OVIP, US, AS, (CARTER, JIMMY), (FRASER, MALCOLM J)
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